DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 354 490 CS 011 197

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TITLE What Do Classroom Teachers Think about the 1992 NAEP in Reading? Technical Report No. 571.
INSTITUTION Center for the Study of Reading, Urbana, IL.
SPONS AGENCY National Academy of Education, Washington, D.C.; Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Mar 93
CONTRACT G0087-C1001-90
NOTE 29p.; For the "Reading Framework," see ED 341 958.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; Evaluation Problems; National Surveys; Questionnaires; *Reading Ability; *Reading Achievement; Reading Research; *Student Evaluation; *Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *National Assessment of Educational Progress

ABSTRACT

A study examined teachers' reactions to the conceptual framework developed and used in designing the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Reading. A total of 312 classroom teachers (of 1000 surveyed) responded to a questionnaire about the "Reading Framework," a document used in developing the 1992 NAEP. Subjects were members of the International Reading Association, and 82% of them were elementary teachers. Results indicated that: (1) more teachers favor exclusive use of authentic passages than those who want passages written to test specific skills; (2) assessing reading to perform a task and reading to be informed were perceived as more essential than assessing reading for literary experience; (3) there was strong support for the four cognitive aspects of reading that were used to develop questions that assess constructing, extending, and examining meaning; (4) there was virtual unanimity for including open-ended test items but differences of opinion about the proportion of open-ended to multiple-choice items; (5) there was far more enthusiasm for investigating portfolio assessment and metacognition than there was for assessing fourth graders' reading fluency; and (6) there were more teachers who favored state-by-state reporting than opposed it. Findings suggest that overall, there is considerable support from many teachers for the rationale articulated in the framework for the 1992 NAEP in Reading. (Appendixes presenting the questionnaire and response data, the cover letter accompanying the questionnaire, and an overview of NAEP and plans for the 1992 Assessment in Reading are attached.) (RS)

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Abstract

A total of 312 classroom teachers responded to a questionnaire about the *Reading Framework*, a document used in developing the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress in Reading (NAEP). Considering teachers' reactions is important because the *Framework* signals a major change in the way NAEP assesses reading. The results from the forced-choice items lend considerable support for the rationale articulated in the *Framework*, whereas the comments yield a more complex view of the teachers' reactions to it. The questionnaire used in the study is appended.

WHAT DO CLASSROOM TEACHERS THINK ABOUT THE 1992 NAEP IN READING?

The 1990s will probably go down in educational history as a period of great change in assessment practices. It will be important for future historians of this period to know something about what classroom teachers thought about the bold initiatives undertaken in an effort to advance educational assessment. This report should be of use to this end because it provides information about teachers' reactions to the conceptual framework developed and used in designing the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress in Reading (NAEP).

Background

During February 1992, fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students in randomly selected schools across the United States participated in the NAEP in Reading. Mandated by Congress, NAEP is a national test given every two years to gather information about students' performance in a number of subject areas (e.g., reading, writing, science, and mathematics). The National Assessment Governing Board, which administrates NAEP, decides on the subject areas to assess and is responsible for identifying appropriate achievement goals for each grade level. The board also sets guidelines for the analysis of data and the reporting of results.

In 1989, the National Assessment Governing Board contracted with the Council of Chief State School Officers to develop a rationale and give recommendations for the 1992 NAEP in Reading. In the past, NAEP considered the nation's students as a single body and reported its data on the basis of grade level, gender, ethnicity, and type of community (rural or urban). In response to recent requests from both state and national political leaders, NAEP data are being reported on a state-by-state basis for the states that volunteered to participate. In 1992, the trial state assessment applied only to fourth-grade performance in reading.

State-by-state reporting is controversial. Because of this, the Council of Chief State School Officers took particular care in planning for the NAEP in Reading. It created the Reading Consensus Project and charged it with developing a framework that would represent a consensus among the various constituencies in the field of reading. Researchers, practitioners, and state and local school administrators were consulted as the framework developed. To this end, drafts of the framework were sent out for comment to chief state school officers, state assessment directors, school administrators, teachers, professors of reading, and assessment experts. The final version of this document, entitled the *Framework for the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (National Assessment Governing Board, 1992) was used to develop specifications for the assessment exercises.

Because of the importance of developing a sound reading assessment, the National Academy of Education commissioned the authors of this report to conduct a study on the content and curricular validity of the 1992 NAEP in Reading (Bruce, Osborn, & Commeyras, 1991). One of our charges was to determine the degree to which the *Framework* represented a consensus about reading among reading educators. As part of our study, we developed a questionnaire based on the content of the *Framework* and sent it to a diverse group of educators and administrators. The data gathered by this questionnaire are reported elsewhere (Commeyras, Osborn, & Bruce, 1992). A subsequent survey was undertaken to gain more specific information about classroom teachers' reactions to the *Framework*. This report focuses on the results of the second survey.

Survey Respondents

In August 1991, we mailed 1,000 questionnaires to a random selection of teachers who were members of the International Reading Association (Appendixes A, B, and C contain a copy of the questionnaire, the cover letter, and an overview describing NAEP and the plans for the 1992 reading assessment). We received 312 responses. Most of the respondents (84%) were elementary school teachers, the balance were middle school, high school, special education, or Chapter 1 teachers. When asked to identify their area of specialization, 76% of the respondents identified reading, whereas 15% selected writing. Approximately half of the respondents said they were "somewhat familiar" with previous NAEPs in Reading; 41% said they were "not at all familiar" with them. Fifty-three percent of the respondents reported teaching for more than 15 years. The profile that seems to fit the majority of these respondents is that of an experienced elementary school teacher who has a special interest in teaching reading and little or no knowledge about NAEP.

Teachers' Reactions to the *Reading Framework*

The questionnaire contained a series of items on the major elements detailed in the *Framework*. The teachers were asked to make forced-choice responses to each item and encouraged to write comments. The information garnered from this survey is particularly rich because so many (82%) of the respondents wrote comments. The *Framework* implies major changes in the way NAEP assesses reading. The teachers' reactions to these changes provide an opportunity to consider what practitioners think about some of the current trends in reading assessment. The remainder of this report will look at teachers' responses to six of these changes: (a) the use of *authentic* texts, (b) the use of three different kinds of reading situations, (c) the assessment of cognitive aspects of reading, (d) the use of open-ended items, (e) the use of special studies, and (f) the practice of state-by-state reporting of results.

Authentic Texts

The *Framework* proposed that the passages in the 1992 NAEP in Reading be full-length *authentic* texts of the kind that students are likely to encounter in everyday reading (e.g., short stories, newspaper articles, bus schedules, textbook chapters, pages from telephone directories). It further proposed that the passages be much longer than those used in previous NAEP assessments, and not paragraphs written solely to assess specific skills.

The majority of respondents agreed with the idea of using only authentic passages (65%), and they presented a variety of reasons for doing so. The reason given most often was that authentic passages would test "real" reading:

> *I believe that students should be tested (and instructed) in materials such as those they will be encountering in real life situations.*

Other respondents commented on the validity of the assessment:

> *By using authentic passages, the validity of the assessment is increased.*

Still others focused on the relationship between assessment and instruction in their comments. Some liked the use of authentic passages because it would send the right message to teachers about instruction:

> *The NAEP must come closer to actual classroom reading/writing experiences as reflected in our increasing use of a whole language approach to literacy.*

Another set of comments focused on testing for skills with authentic texts. Some respondents thought reading skills could be tested with authentic passages:

> *Specific reading skills can be checked using authentic texts. These are what they will be using everyday.*

Others thought testing specific skills was beside the point:

> *We've done so much assessment of specific skills, yet it hasn't translated into an understanding of how a student derives meaning. Let us pursue authentic assessment.*

Motivation was yet another reason some teachers supported the use of authentic passages. They thought students would be more likely to find the passages interesting and thus do better on the assessment:

> *I am so glad that these tests will finally have passages that are meaningful to students - everyday reading and real-life experiences are one way to encourage students to put forth an effort when responding.*

About a dozen comments supported using authentic passages, but offered some cautions and concerns:

> *Authentic passages represent the real world, but I think full-length texts would be overwhelming. Why not use excerpts of texts?*

> *I worry about prior knowledge. Kids who know the subject are at an advantage.*

Another group of respondents (33%) favored an assessment that combined authentic passages with passages written to test specific skills. Many of these teachers thought doing so would yield a broader and more varied assessment:

> *A true test takes in consideration competency in a wide variety of situations.*

> *I believe it is most important that students see the need to be good readers and be exposed to relevant passages. Therefore the test should be over what they have been exposed to, while at the same time some compromise has to be made with incorporating specific skills that will be true indicators of how well the child can read. So test what they have been taught but use skills that can be measured.*

Three Reading Situations

The *Framework* called for the passages on the 1992 NAEP in Reading to be classified into three types of reading situations: (a) reading for literary experience, (b) reading to acquire information, and (c) reading to perform a task. It suggested the following plan for assessing these three types of reading situations: reading for literary experience by having students respond to questions about short stories, poems, or essays; reading to acquire information by having them respond to questions about a magazine and newspaper articles, encyclopedia, and textbook selections; reading to perform a task by having them respond to questions about bus and train schedules, directions for games, recipes, maps, and so forth.

More than 80% of the teachers thought it was either "very important" or "absolutely essential" to assess reading in these three situations. The strongest support was for reading to perform a task--83% of respondents said that this was "absolutely essential." Following that, 68% of the respondents thought it was "absolutely essential" to assess reading to be informed. Interestingly, only 33% of the teachers considered reading for literary experience "absolutely essential."

Only 15% of the teachers commented on the use of the three reading situations. Some comments provide explanations for rating reading for literary experience as less than essential:

> *Performing tasks is basic to existence for all people, regardless of educational level. Staying informed is also important in adult life. Literary experience will be primarily for enjoyment, in later life.*

> *As a literature teacher I think reading for literary experience is extremely important, but reading to be informed and reading to perform a task is essential for all.*

There were also comments from those who rated all three situations as "absolutely essential";

> *I am especially enthusiastic about this innovation involving assessment in 3 reading situations. Again, we must get the word to teachers so this assessment will reflect what is being taught in the classroom!*

Other comments included suggestions about the use of the three reading situations:

> *I also feel it would be beneficial to ask students to identify what kind of reading they think they need to do.*

Assessment of Cognitive Aspects of Reading

The *Framework* proposed that proficient readers use a range of cognitive abilities to construct meaning from a text and to elaborate upon and respond critically to it. It identifies four abilities: (a) forming an initial understanding, (b) developing an interpretation, (c) personal reflection and response, and (d) demonstrating a critical stance. The *Framework* also proposed that these cognitive aspects of reading are not sequential, hierarchical, or representative of subskills. Finally, it proposed assessment of the four cognitive aspects in each of the three reading situations.

It suggested, for example, that the ability to construct meaning be assessed by two types of questions: forming-initial-understanding questions, which require students to provide an initial impression or global understanding of what they have read, and developing-an-interpretation questions, which require students to go beyond their initial impressions to create a more complete understanding of what they have read.

The *Framework* also suggested that the ability to elaborate on or respond critically to a text be assessed by two types of questions: personal reflection and response questions, which require students to connect knowledge from the text with their own personal background knowledge, and demonstrating-critical-stance questions, which require students to consider a text objectively through critical evaluation, comparison and contrast, application to practical tasks, and understanding the impact of such text features as irony, humor, and organization.

More than 85% of the respondents thought that assessing these four cognitive aspects was "very important" or "absolutely essential." Personal reflection and response was selected most often as "absolutely essential" (62%). A number of teachers qualified their support for personal reflection and response. There were concerns about the role of background knowledge and the relationship among the cognitive aspects of reading:

> *If the reader has no personal background or prior knowledge, not only will personal reflection and response be a zero but the reader will also have absolutely no idea what he/she just read.*

I'm not sure developing an interpretation and personal response and reflection can be considered apart - these work for the reader in tandem.

Another set of comments focused on demonstrating a critical stance. A number of teachers questioned the appropriateness of this kind of reading:

Cognitively, this may be a little heavy for fourth graders.
This must be measured carefully considering the developmental level of the reader (child to adult) and depends largely on the reader's use of "a" (forming an initial understanding).

Not all reading requires this - Sometimes it's just for enjoyment.

Open-Ended Items

The *Framework* called for approximately 40% of assessment time to be spent on open-ended items, substantially more time than was given to such items in any previous NAEP assessment. The rationale given for increasing the number of open-ended items was that it would evaluate a reader's ability to generate organized, thoughtful responses to authentic reading passages.

Virtually all of the teachers supported the inclusion of open-ended items (97%). Almost as many agreed with the rationale given for including open-ended items (94%). Most teachers (76%) thought 40% of the test-taking time period was about the right amount of time for students to spend on open-ended items. The remaining teachers thought it was either too much (8%) or too little (11%).

Twenty-four percent of the teachers commented on the inclusion of open-ended items. Many of these comments focused on the perceived benefits of open-ended items over multiple-choice items:

There has been far too much emphasis placed on multiple choice exams and regurgitation of "facts." Open-ended items encourage emphasis on the development of higher level thinking skills. It's been my experience that very little in this world is either black or white.

Important to explore and consider students' responses as they more closely reflect thought processes and reasoning than do other types of questioning (i.e., multiple choice).

Other teachers who favored the inclusion of open-ended items brought up concerns about their use:

I appreciate the inclusion of open-ended items. Reliance upon written responses is logical, but many students will not produce the level of organized thought/response unless given an opportunity to read and revise their written responses.

The only problem is that, ultimately, you are judging reading ability through writing (the written response), and that isn't always an accurate way to evaluate.

I think it is important that this form of assessment not be done too early - i.e. be sure it is developmentally appropriate for age group.

I fear the subjectiveness of interpretation.

These four comments address areas of concern that seem worthy of further consideration. The first relates to how the test will be administered, and whether a match exists between test administration and classroom practices that encourage students to engage in process writing. The second comment notes that open-ended items confound reading and writing abilities. The third suggests that assessing reading

through written responses should be handled differentially by grade level. The last comment hints at the issue of how to score open-ended items fairly. Thus, the great enthusiasm for open-ended items indicated by these teachers was coupled with substantial procedural concerns.

Special Studies

The Framework called for the 1992 NAEP in Reading to collect additional information about the reading performance of fourth-grade students through special studies, called the oral reading, portfolio, and metacognitive studies. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they thought each study was needed.

Only 15% of the teachers thought the oral reading study, which was to assess fluency by timing and analyzing students' oral reading, was greatly needed. Approximately 9% of the respondents thought the study was "not at all" needed. There were more comments on this study than there were for the other two studies. Most of the comments were objections to assessing oral reading:

> *I hope you would NEVER time oral reading. Why? What is the purpose?*
>
> *Oral reading is seldom done in real life and can be affected by too many factors unrelated to actual reading skills.*
>
> *Some people are not fluent orally -- it's not important to be orally fluent to be a good reader. Silent reading skills are crucial.*

Other teachers wanted more information about the methodology to be employed in the oral reading study:

> *How will this be measured? How will objectivity be maintained? I believe that it is very important but wonder how, realistically, this can be measured.*
>
> *Is the focus fluency? Perhaps careful error analysis would provide information as valuable as just a measure of fluency.*

More than half the teachers (56%) judged the portfolio assessment study, which was to gather and analyze examples of actual classroom work in reading, as well as to gather information about what students read in class and on their own, as very important. Less than 3% of respondents regarded the portfolio assessment study as unnecessary. The teachers comments indicate they differ in their views about the benefits of studying portfolio assessment. Some were quite enthusiastic:

> *Portfolio assessment is the answer because it "shows" more than any grade or test the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student.*
>
> *Will allow us to consider reading in a broader sense, beyond the testing day.*

Other teachers foresaw potential difficulties:

> *"Portfolio" is a bandwagon, and it is being (and will be) misused, I think. Proceed carefully, PLEASE!*
>
> *Portfolio Assessment would be time consuming and not necessarily more accurate than group test.*

The metacognitive study was to examine readers' awareness of their own comprehension. Their use of effective reading strategies was assessed, analyzed, and reported as descriptive data. This study received strong support from 52% of the teachers. Only 3% thought it was superfluous. Comments on this study were split between those who thought it would yield useful information and those who were skeptical:

> *As one involved in metacognitive instruction I am particularly heartened by this emphasis.*
>
> *I'm a good typist. But to try to explain what I do when I type would be very difficult. It's become too much a part of me. I think a good reader has much the same problem.*

State-by-State Reporting

The last item on the questionnaire asked about the decision to report NAEP data at the state level. The teachers reactions were mixed on this issue. The majority of teachers indicated they "strongly favored" (37%) or "somewhat favored" (35%) state-by-state reporting. Fewer said they were "somewhat opposed" (15%) or "strongly opposed" (10%) to it. Only a handful (3%) had no opinion. Teachers "strongly in favor" of state-by-state reporting made comments like the following:

> *As a teacher, my curriculum is mandated by the state. If our children compare poorly to other states, it will give the "powers that be" some "food for thought."*
>
> *Only because it might bring about some changes in instruction - even more important it might help the legislature to appropriate more money for education.*

Those teachers who were only "somewhat in favor" of state-by-state reporting articulated concerns about how the results will be reported and used in the name of educational reform:

> *Demographic statistics could be included to help interpret. For example, I teach in a school in a lower socioeconomic area where education is not valued to the extent it is elsewhere. I hate to see my students' scores compared to those of an area where student backgrounds encourage higher achievement.*
>
> *It's nice to know where we rank in relation to other states; however I become leery of administrators, news coverage, and politicians who misinterpret and sensationalize the results. It's too bad that they do not have global understanding of what they read.*

Those who were "somewhat opposed" or "strongly opposed" expressed similar concerns:

> *Such reporting may lead to misinterpretations on the part of the public. States at the bottom may feel defeated and students graduating from high schools in such states may find it more difficult to be accepted by universities. Business people contemplating establishing offices and factories in such states may decide to go elsewhere.*
>
> *I dislike claims based on test results that one area is doing a better job of educating students than another. I'd rather know how what you find in your portfolio study relates to test scores. Or - how does giving students some choice in what they read relate to test scores?*

The comments indicate that these teachers are inclined to qualify their support for state-by-state reporting. They seem to have a whole host of fears regarding the misuse of test data and seem deeply concerned about the potential harm that might be caused by this kind of reporting.

Conclusions

Any conclusions drawn from the results of this survey questionnaire should be made in light of two very important considerations. The first is that the survey concerns the *Framework*, the document that articulates the rationale for the 1992 NAEP in Reading. The respondents did not see any test passages or items. It is entirely possible that their support for the elements of the *Framework* would not necessarily hold for the actual assessment. The fit between the *Framework* and the assessment is a separate issue that we have addressed elsewhere (Bruce, Osborn, & Commeyras, 1991).

The second consideration concerns the characteristics of the 312 teachers who responded to the survey. Primarily, these were elementary school teachers who belong to the IRA. These teachers were apt to be more aware of current trends and issues in reading because they receive as part of their IRA membership *The Reading Teacher*, a journal reporting current theory, research, and practice on literacy. The reactions of the teachers who filled out our questionnaire may be representative of elementary school teachers who belong to IRA but not all elementary teachers.

Our conclusions are made with these two considerations in mind. Overall, there is considerable support from many teachers for the rationale articulated in the framework for the 1992 NAEP in Reading. More teachers favor exclusive use of authentic passages than those who want passages written to test specific skills. Assessing reading to perform a task and reading to be informed are perceived as more essential than assessing reading for literary experience. There is strong support for the four cognitive aspects of reading that were used to develop questions that assess constructing, extending, and examining meaning. There is virtual unanimity for including open-ended test items but differences of opinion about the proportion of open-ended to multiple-choice items. In regards to the special studies, there is far more enthusiasm for investigating portfolio assessment and metacognition than there is for assessing fourth graders' reading fluency. Lastly, there are more teachers who favor state-by-state reporting than oppose it.

The comments made by the respondents to this questionnaire demonstrate that what looks fairly straightforward in percentages becomes far more complex in light of the comments accompanying the forced-choice options. The teachers used comments to qualify responses by voicing concerns, posing questions, and offering contextual information. We find these data valuable because they provide a window through which to view teachers' thoughts on what matters when evaluating reading performance.

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Author Note

The work upon which this publication was based was supported in part by a grant from the National Academy of Education, and in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement under Cooperative Agreement No. G0087-C1001-90 with the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois.

APPENDIX A

REACTIONS OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS TO NAEP READING FRAMEWORK

Survey Based on the Content of the Framework for the 1992 NAEP (312 Respondents)

A. **Characteristics of Proficient Readers**

1. The Framework identifies characteristics of proficient, or good, readers. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about these characteristics.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Good readers possess the knowledge, behavior, and attitudes that allow for continual learning through reading . . (No response - .32%)	79.49%	19.23%	0.32%	0.64%
b. Good readers read with enough fluency so that they can focus on the meaning of what they read, rather than devoting a lot of attention to figuring out the words	85.49%	13.78%	0.32%	0.64%
c. Good readers use what they already know to understand the text they are reading . . . . . (No response = .32%)	84.29%	14.74%	0	0.64%
d. Good readers extend, elaborate, and critically judge the meaning of what they read	66.99%	30.45%	1.60%	0.96%
	74.35%	23.70%	0.65%	0.32%
e. Good readers plan, manage, and check the progress of their reading . (No response = .32%)	45.83%	44.23%	8.65%	0.96%
f. Good readers use a variety of effective strategies to aid their understanding . . . . . (No response = .32%)	82.05%	16.67%	0.32%	0.64%
g. Good readers can read different types of texts and can read for different purposes . . . . . (No response = .32%)	82.69%	16.03%	0.32%	0.64%

B. **Views of Reading**

2. The Framework makes the following statements about reading. Indicate the extent to which you find each definition or statement acceptable.

	Very acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Very unacceptable
a. Reading is a complex process that involves an interaction among the reader, the text, and the context, or situation	81.73%	17.31%	0.64%	0.32%
b. The term "reading literacy" connotes more than basic or functional literacy. Specifically, it connotes knowing when to read, how to read, and how to reflect on what is being read	69.87%	28.85%	0.96%	0.32%
c. Proficient reading is essential for successful functioning in schools, homes, and workplaces . . . . . (No Response = .32%)	76.60%	22.44%	0.64%	0
d. Proficient reading contributes to a sense of personal satisfaction . . . . . (No Response = .64%)	75.32%	23.72%	0.32%	0

C. **Reading Situations**

3. In the NAEP, students' reading ability will be assessed in three situations: reading for literary experience, reading to be informed, and reading to perform a task. In your opinion, how important is it to assess students' reading ability in each situation.

	Absolutely essential	Very important	Moderately important	Somewhat important	Not at all important
a. Reading for literary experience (short stories, poems, essays)	33.01%	50.96%	14.42%	1.60%	0%
b. Reading to be informed (magazine and newspaper articles, encyclopedias, textbook chapters)	68.27%	29.49%	1.60%	0.32%	0.32%
c. Reading to perform a task (bus and train schedules, directions for games, recipes, maps, etc.)	82.69%	15.06%	1.92%	0%	0.32%

4a. The following table shows the proportion of items in the NAEP allocated at each grade level to each type of reading situation. This distribution of items is intended to reflect the changing demands made of students as they progress through school.

Grade level	Reading for literary experience	Reading to be informed	Reading to perform a task
4	55%	45%	0%
8	40%	40%	20%
12	35%	45%	20%

Do you agree with this NAEP allocation of items?

Yes 39.74%
No 58.65%

No Response 1.60%

4b. If you disagree, use the table below to show how you would reallocate the proportion of items.

Grade level	Reading for literary experience	Reading to be informed	Reading to perform a task
4	46.32 (7.37)	38.60 (6.87)	15.05 (8.67)
8	38.92 (6.75)	38.92 (5.24)	22.13 (6.95)
12	35.07 (7.82)	40.81 (6.67)	24.17 (8.14)

D. **Cognitive Aspects of Reading**

5. The Framework identifies four cognitive aspects of reading to be assessed within each of the three reading situations. Each of these aspects is described below. Indicate how important you believe each to be.

	Absolutely essential	Very important	Moderately important	Somewhat important	Not at all important
a. Forming an initial understanding requires the reader to provide an initial impression or global understanding of what was read . . . (No Response = .32%)	50.64%	41.67%	7.37%	0	0
b. Developing an interpretation requires the reader to develop a more complete understanding of what was read by linking information across parts of a text as well as by focusing on specific information in the text . . . . (No Response = 0.32%)	52.26%	42.95%	4.17%	0	0
c. Personal reflection and response requires the reader to connect knowledge from the text with his or her own personal background knowledge (No Response = .32%)	61.86%	27.88%	9.29%	0.64%	0
d. Demonstrating a critical stance requires the reader to consider the text objectively and involves a range of tasks including critical evaluation, comparing and contrasting, application to practical tasks, and understanding the impact of such text features as irony, humor, and organization . . . . . (No Response = .64%)	48.40%	38.46%	9.94%	2.24%	0.32%

6a. In your opinion, are there other cognitive processes of reading that need to be represented in the Framework?

Yes	9.29%
No	80.45%
No Response	10.26%

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E. **Open-ended Items**

7a. Approximately 40% of the assessment time will be spent on open-ended items. This is substantially more time than has been given to such items in any previous NAEP assessment. The following rationale is given for the increased use of open-ended items is that they provide a means for examining whether readers can generate organized, carefully thought-out responses to reading. Also, open-ended items more closely resemble the real world tasks that students must perform outside of school.

Do you support the inclusion of open-ended items in the NAEP Assessment?

Yes	97.12%
No	1.28%
No Response	1.60%

7c. Do you agree with the rationale given above for including more open-ended items?

Yes	94.23%
No	1.60%
No Response	4.17%

7d. Do you think the proportion of open-ended items (40%) in the NAEP is:

Too much	8.33%
The right amount	76.60%
Too little	10.58%
No Response	4.49%

F. **Passage Selection**

8a. The passages used in the NAEP will be authentic, full-length texts that students are likely to encounter in everyday reading (i.e., short stories, newspaper articles, bus schedules, textbook chapters, pages from telephone directories). The passages will not be paragraphs written solely to assess specific reading skills.

In your opinion, should the assessment use . . .

Only authentic passages, ...	65.38%
Only passages written to test specific skills, or	0.64%
A combination of authentic passages and passages written to test specific skills?	32.69%
No Response	1.28%

G. **Teaching to the Test**

9. Although the Framework claims that assessment should not drive instruction, it also states that the NAEP assessment must be an appropriate guide to instruction, should teachers use it to "teach to the test."

a. Do you believe that NAEP should attempt to develop an assessment that can serve as a useful guide to instruction?

Yes	71.47%
No	25.32%
No Response	3.21%

H. Special Studies

10. Several types of information about the reading performance of students will be collected from special studies with small subsamples of students. These studies are listed below. To what extent do you believe that each of these studies is needed?

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	To a very great extent 5
a. Oral Reading. Fluency will be assessed by timing and analyzing students' oral reading	8.01%	23.72%	41.03%	19.55%	7.69%
b. Portfolio Assessment. Portfolio activities will be used to gather and analyze examples of actual classroom work in reading as well as to gather information about what the students read in class and on their own . . . . . (No Response = 0.32%)	1.60%	4.49%	9.29%	39.10%	45.19%
c. The Metacognitive Study. Readers' awareness of their own comprehension and their use of effective reading strategies will be assessed, analyzed and reported as descriptive data . (No Response = 0.96%)	2.56%	4.49%	14.10%	35.58%	42.31%

I. Goals of the 1992 NAEP in Reading

11. The committees that developed the Framework were given the following set of guidelines. Indicate how well you believe the assessment will meet each one of the guidelines.

	Not at all well 1	2	3	4	To a very great extent 5
a. To focus on outcomes (is performance oriented), rather than representing an instructional or theoretical approach ..... (No Response = 5.13%)	0.64%	2.24%	23.08%	43.91%	25.00%
b. To address changing literacy needs for employability, personal development, and citizenship . (No Response = 4.49%)	0.64%	3.85%	14.74%	42.63%	33.65%
c. To expand the scope of assessment strategies by including open-ended questions and special studies on oral reading, portfolio assessment, and reading strategies ..... (No Response = 3.85%)	0.64%	2.24%	6.41%	33.33%	53.53%
d. To reflect contemporary research on reading and literacy ..... (No Response = 4.49%)	1.28%	2.56%	12.50%	42.31%	36.86%
e. To provide information for policy makers and educators that will assist in the improvement of educational performance .... (No Response = 4.49%)	0.64%	2.24%	15.38%	42.63%	34.29%

J. State-by-State Reporting

12. The 1992 NAEP for reading will provide state-by-state as well as national reports of student performance. How do you feel about state-by-state reporting of student performance?

Strongly in favor 36.54%

Somewhat in favor ... 35.26%

Somewhat opposed ... 15.06%

Strongly opposed 9.94%

No Response 3.20%

K. **Personal Information**

13a. Are you currently employed as a teacher at the elementary, secondary, or college level?

Yes	94.87%
No	4.49%
No Response	0.64%

b. Indicate the grade level(s) you teach. (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

K-2	45.19%
3-5	38.46%
6-9	15.38%
10-12	3.85%
Special Education	.4.17%
Chapter 1	4.17%
Undergraduate	2.56%
Graduate	4.81%
Other (SPECIFY)	3.85%

_____

14a. Do you currently hold an administrative position at the school, district, or state level?

Yes	6.73%
No	90.38%
No Response	2.88%

b. What administrative position do you hold?

Superintendent of Public Instruction	0%
Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent	0%
Principal/Assistant Principal	2.56%
Reading Coordinator/Supervisor/Consultant	4.17%
Other (SPECIFY)_____	1.60%

15a. Do you currently hold a college or university position?

Yes	7.05%
No	90.06%

b. What position do you hold?

Professor	1.60%
Administrator	0%
Research Associate	0%
Other (SPECIFY)	5.45%

16. Indicate the area that best represents your field of specialization.

Reading	75.96%
Writing	15.38%
Assessment	5.45%
Other (SPECIFY)	16.35%

17. How many years have you been employed in the field of education?

0-5 years	13.46%
6-10 years	13.78%
11-15 years	19.23%
16-25 years	36.54%
Over 25 years	16.67%

18. How familiar are you with previous National Assessments of Educational Progress in Reading?

Very familiar	6.41%
Somewhat familiar	51.92%
Not at all familiar	41.35%

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

May 1, 1991

Dear Educator:

We are writing to ask for your help as we prepare a review of the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Reading. The reading NAEP for 1992 will be based on the ideas and recommendations set forth in a document called the *Framework*. The National Academy of Education has asked us to examine this document to determine the extent to which it represents a consensus about reading among professionals in the field of education.

The review we prepare will be one of ten such reviews of various aspects of the 1992 NAEP that have been commissioned by the National Academy. These reviews will form the basis of a report that will be presented to Congress in October.

So that the ideas and recommendations of the *Framework* could be commented on by a number of educators, we have prepared a survey questionnaire based on the content of the *Framework*. We hope very much that you will find the survey of interest, and that you will complete it, and return it to us. Most questions can be answered by circling a single code number following the question. We encourage you to comment on any or all of the items that are of particular importance to you.

To provide some background information, we have enclosed a brief overview that describes the NAEP, the development of the *Framework*, and some special features of the 1992 reading assessment. If you have any questions, please call us at 217-333-6551.

We would be most appreciative if you could return the survey in the envelope provided by May 31, or otherwise, at your earliest convenience.

Your responses and comments will be invaluable to us as we prepare our review for the National Academy. Thank you very much for your time and your effort.

Best wishes,

Bertram Bruce
Professor of Education
University of Illinois

Jean Osborn
Associate Director
Center for the Study of Reading

Michelle Commeyras
Project Associate
Center for the Study of Reading

Janet Salm
Project Assistant
Center for the Study of Reading

APPENDIX C

OVERVIEW OF NAEP AND PLANS FOR 1992 ASSESSMENT IN READING

What Is The National Assessment of Educational Progress?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress -- "the Nation's Report Card" -- is mandated by Congress. Every two years, NAEP assesses the performance of more than 120,000 fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students in the nation's schools. The purpose is to gather information about students' performance and about changes in their performance over time.

Since 1969, NAEP has conducted seven assessments in reading, six each in science and mathematics, five in writing, two each in music and art, and one in computer science. NAEP has also conducted special assessments in citizenship, U. S. government, U. S. history, literature, social studies, and other areas.

The National Assessment Governing Board decides on the subject areas to be assessed, including those specified by the Congress. It also is responsible for identifying appropriate achievement goals for each age level; for developing the objectives, specifications, and procedures for each test; for setting the data analyzing and reporting guidelines; and for determining procedures for interstate, regional, and national comparisons based on the data.

The Framework for the 1992 NAEP

In 1989, the National Assessment Governing Board contracted with the Council of Chief State School Officers to develop a rationale and give recommendations for the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress for Reading. Because of the diverse and often conflicting opinions about reading and its assessment held by reading educators and others in the field of education, the Council created the Reading Consensus Project and charged it with developing an assessment framework that would be acceptable to the field as a whole.

In response to this charge, the Reading Consensus Project appointed committees composed of teachers and administrators, members of state departments of education, university professors whose specialties included reading and assessment, and representatives from a number of educational, business, and professional organizations. These committees met between October 1989 and February 1990.

The members of these committees were dedicated not only to developing a framework that would reflect the consensus of the field of reading but also to ensuring that the framework would be consistent with sound, contemporary research about reading. To this end, drafts of the developing framework were sent out for comment to a large number of chief state school officers; state assessment directors; school administrators and teachers; professors of reading, education, and psychology; and assessment experts. The committees' final version of the Framework was submitted to the National Assessment Governing Board in June 1990.

Changes from Earlier NAEP Assessments

The Framework proposes some major changes in the 1992 NAEP assessment:

1. **Authentic Texts.** The assessment will use reading passages drawn from books and articles like those students read in school and on their own, rather than passages written solely for testing purposes, such as for assessing particular reading skills. These passages will be much longer than those used in previous NAEP assessments. The eighth-grade students will, for example, read an entire short story, a newspaper article, and a complete set of instructions.

2. **Three Reading Situations.** The passages students will read are classified into three types of reading situations: (1) reading for literary experience, (2) reading to acquire information, and (3) reading to perform a task. Reading for literary experience will be assessed by having students respond to questions about a short story or a poem. Reading to acquire information will as assessed by having them respond to questions about a newspaper article or a textbook selection. Reading to perform a task will be assessed by having them respond to questions about an instruction manual or a train schedule.

3. **Assessment of the Cognitive Aspects of Reading.** The Framework recognizes that proficient readers use a range of cognitive abilities to construct meaning from a text and to elaborate upon and respond critically to it. The Framework also recognizes that these cognitive aspects of reading are not sequential or hierarchical and do not represent a set of subskills. The Framework proposes that these cognitive aspects be assessed within each of the three reading situations.

The ability to construct meaning, for example, will be assessed by two types of questions:

Forming initial understanding questions, which require students to provide an initial impression or global understanding of what they have read.
Developing an interpretation questions, which require students to go beyond their initial impressions to create a more complete understanding of what they have read.

The ability to elaborate on or respond critically to a text will also be assessed by two types of questions:

Personal reflection and response questions, which require students to connect knowledge from the text with their own personal background knowledge.
Demonstrating critical stance questions, which require students to consider a text objectively.

4. **Multiple-Choice and Open-Ended Questions.** Approximately 60% of assessment time will be spent on multiple-choice questions, 40% on open-ended questions. Some of the open-ended questions will be designed for one- or two-sentence answers, others for more extended written responses. Primary-trait scoring will be used for the extended responses, and scoring rubrics will be created for each question.

5. **Three Special Studies**

Several types of information about the reading performance of students will be collected from special studies with subsamples of students.

Oral Reading. Tape recorded interviews will be used to examine the oral reading fluency of fourth-grade students.

Portfolio Assessment. Taped interviews will also be used to gather information about classroom reading instruction. For these portfolio type activities, the students will talk about both their independent and classroom reading assignments. In addition, they will be asked to bring samples of their written work to the interview.

Metacognitive Study. The metacognitive strategies (the strategies readers use to monitor their reading comprehension) that fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students employ as they read will be investigated.

6. **State-by-State Reporting.** In the past, NAEP considered the nation's students as a single body, and reported its data on the basis of grade level, gender, ethnicity and type of community (rural or urban). In response to requests from both state and national educational leaders, NAEP data now will also be reported by state. The 1990 NAEP mathematics assessment will provide state-by-state information, and the 1992 fourth-grade reading assessment will do the same. It is anticipated that in the future, all NAEP data will be reported as both a national and as state-by-state assessments.